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SOME EFFECTS OF 4-H CLUB WORK ON FARM HOMES

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Department of Agriculture

A radio talk by Lester A. Schlup, In Charge, Visual Instruction and Editorial Section, Cooperative Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, delivered in the National 4-H Club Radio Program, August 6, 1938, and broadcast by 90 stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company.

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JOHN BAKER:

Now we hear from Lester C. Schlup, of the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture. Mr. Schlup keeps his finger on the pulse of 4-H Club activities all over the country, for he is editor of the Extension Service Review, a magazine which contains stories about what county agents in agriculture, home economics, and 4-H Club work are doing. Lester, you've met the Nixon family from West Virginia, and heard their story of what 4-H Club work has meant to them. What can you add to this story of 4-H Clubs and family partnerships.

LESTER A. SCHLUP:

Not much, perhaps, except to remind you that there are well over a million 4-H club members in this country. That was a splendid 4-H story told by the Nixon family and inspiring -- But splendid and inspiring stories of how 4-H club work strengthens farm-home ties could be told by many thousands of other 4-H families. It is natural, of course for parents and children to work together more closely on the farm than in the city. But this close relationship is especially true in families that have children in 4-H club work. Most 4-H club members are willing to shoulder a part of the family load -- and they are better qualified to do this because of their 4-H training in farming and homemaking.

I suppose, John, that you are wondering how I happen to know so much about this matter. Well, as the editor of the Extension Service Review, stories of Extension work come to me from county extension agents all over the country. Many of these stories are about 4-H club members who work closely with their parents in a common interest --- who have responsible contact with the live problems of the farm and home and who have done their full share in helping to solve those problems.

Let me give you a few examples of what I mean. These examples are taken at random from stories that have come to the Extension Service Review. Here is one. It came from County Agent Jesse Wood of Martin County, Indiana. It tells what the 4-H boys of Martin County have done to improve their dad's potato crop in the last 14 years. It seems as if the dads didn't grow anywhere near enough potatoes for home use. They liked to grow something else better, probably. County Agent Wood says that each year for these last 14 years he has had about 70 4-H boys who undertook to grow more and better potatoes. To qualify for the potato club, each boy agreed to grow at least a quarter-acre patch and also to follow carefully the production practices recommended by the county agent. Now, John, wouldn't you, as the head of a family with healthy appetites, like to see a quarter-acre potato crop down cellar this fall? And wouldn't you, as a 4-H youngster, feel yourself a really important member of the family if you had produced, say, 60 bushels of No. One Early Ohio's? You would,

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I know, and so did these Indiana boys. Did the 4-H work which they carried on during the last 14 years under the leadership of County Agent Wood have an effect on the potato practices of their parents? It surely did. The home folks are buying more fertilizer for potatoes. They are using better growing practices. More certified seed is being used. Production of potatoes of better quality has increased by fifty percent and the parents have learned to grade before selling.

Now, let's take a long jump from Indiana down to Florida. When County Agent McClellan came to Pasco County in western Florida three years ago he found only a few dairy cows for family use. He immediately enlisted the help of 4-H boys. To get the full effect of this, John, you will have to think of yourself as a citrus grower: --- A grower with strong convictions that it would be expensive --- practically impossible to keep a family cow on your place. Then, if your boy learned to grow really cheap feed, filled a trench silo, and, by good management, developed a good producing milk cow from a heifer he bought himself, you would be proud, wouldn't you? I can just see you beam, and the boy get chesty when the milk glasses are filled at dinner time. Well, John, that's just what happened in Pasco County, Florida. After three years, 46 low-income families are enjoying the benefits of good milk cows, chiefly because of 4-H club work in the county.

What about the feminine side? Do the 4-H girls have any effect upon farm homes? Well, maybe I would admit qualms, talking on that side. At least I would if I didn't have this documentary evidence. Look at this, John. Here is an account of a survey to find out what girls really like in 4-H club work - farm girls in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. They say they like --- management of the home --- planning and preparing meals --- caring for their own rooms and for the house --- care of the younger children --- work in the garden --- sewing --- keeping accounts. As a mere male, would you say it helps the family for the girls to go in for such as that? Gives you a nice, comfortable feeling that all's right with the world, at least the important small world within the four walls of the home.

Just to show that the interest isn't all on the side of the boys and girls -- take a look at this story from Pacific County, Washington, which says that an organized group of the mothers of 4-H club girls is studying a program based on the club work outlined for their daughters. In doing this, they found that they were better able to encourage and help the girls.

And how about this story on Nebraska "Fix-It" club work, organized for the express purpose of keeping up repairs about the farm. And this Minnesota story - which tells how the 4-H girls have added home safety to their health program. And this Missouri story of how 4-H boys and girls are helping their fathers to keep record books, and in so doing have learned not to take father's pocketbook for granted. And this work Rhode Island club boys and girls are doing to improve the looks of the countryside - by planting native shrubs on the home grounds and along the road. And--- well, I could go on all day telling stories of how the better ways of farming and homemaking, learned by 4-H club members, are finding a definite place in the regular routine of the farm family. But, perhaps, I should say, "Continued in our next issue."
